

# The University Neighborhood Network

*Linking neighborhood-based organizations,  
faculty, and students in research partnerships*

## **CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION**

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
University of Minnesota  
330 Humphrey Center

<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr/projects/unn/>

A project of Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization  
(NPCR) at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)

## Project Description

The University-Neighborhood Network is a project of Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR), at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). The University-Neighborhood Network, supported by the Minneapolis Foundation, seeks to create a systematic way of linking neighborhood projects to areas of academic research in order to serve the mutual interests of Twin Cities' neighborhoods and academic institutions. The project began with a pilot program at the University of Minnesota this spring. Following this trial phase, the University-Neighborhood Network (UNN) will work to include other Twin Cities colleges and universities that participate in the NPCR consortium.

The process for UNN projects is as follows:

- The University-Neighborhood Network identifies university courses which cover areas relevant to urban neighborhoods and offer a student research component.
- Neighborhood-based organizations in Minneapolis and St. Paul develop project descriptions for student research projects within these courses.
- Students are invited to pick a neighborhood project to fulfill the requirements of their course.
- Completed projects are made available to students, instructors, and neighborhoods.

Through the University-Neighborhood Network, students have the opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience applying their knowledge to real-world situations, and neighborhood-based organizations have the opportunity to direct an individualized research project to fulfill existing needs of their organizations, and faculty can provide students with a rich educational experience.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Those involved in UNN projects are involved in an exciting and innovative collaboration bringing together students, neighborhood practitioners, and instructors in the creation of a process and product far greater than the sum of its parts. The teaching and learning opportunities neighborhoods are creating are highly valuable, and the research products that the student-faculty team creates will fulfill needs of the neighborhoods. This synergy can only be assured by deliberate and thoughtful partners. The following pages outline roles and provide tips to successful UNN projects.

### Faculty

Faculty are welcome and encouraged to include a wide range of courses in the UNN. Interested faculty will be asked to complete a letter of agreement with UNN, outlining their commitment to and understanding of community-based research.

Courses best suited to the UNN include:

- Courses which offer an out-of-class student project for individual students, a student group, or the class as a whole. Students may be graduate or undergraduate level.
- The student project has potential relevance to neighborhood-based organizations.
- Projects are aimed to create a positive learning experience for the student and, equally important, to create a valuable product for the sponsoring neighborhood-based organization.

To involve your course(s) in the UNN, please complete an application form which is available on our web site (<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr/projects/unn/top.html>) or by calling 625-1551).

## Neighborhoods

Approximately 5 weeks prior to the start of the quarter (or semester), neighborhood-based organizations (NBO's) will be invited to respond to a comprehensive list of UNN courses. This list includes a general description of the course as well as detailed parameters for student projects. NBO's are encouraged to create project proposals for courses that can fulfill existing needs of their organization for research. Neighborhood organizations can confirm they are on our mailing list by contacting UNN at 625-1551.

NBO's are also invited to suggest topics not covered by listed UNN courses. This way, UNN staff can seek out faculty who may offer an appropriate course or who might be willing to create a workshop or independent study option to fulfill the neighborhood need. Such requests should be made via our web site or by calling UNN (<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr/projects/unn/top.html>) or 625-1551).

## Students

Students enrolled in UNN courses have access to the UNN web site (<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr/projects/unn/top.html>) to find neighborhood project proposals. Students are welcome to pick a project that best suits their interests and expertise to fulfill their course requirements. In general, students will contact the NBO directly. If more than one student is interested in a particular project, the NBO is responsible for choosing the student that best fits their project and organizational needs. The student and NBO should create a letter of agreement at initiation of the project in order to make explicit the goals and objectives for each party. Completed projects will be made available to the course instructor and the neighborhood organization.

## Tips for UNN Projects

The following tips have been recorded from past participants and will hopefully provide insight for UNN projects.

- There are three equal goals to balance throughout these projects: the need of the community organization for useful research, the learning opportunity for the student, and the teaching environment for the instructor.
- Students will be working independently under the supervision of their course instructors, but even the best student cannot meet the needs of the NBO without being given clear objectives at the beginning and constructive feedback throughout the project. Likewise, students must be self-motivated to move their projects forward.
- Projects with realistic expectations as well as clearly defined parameters and goals are the most successful. This is equally the responsibility of the instructor, NBO, and student(s). Instructors and neighborhoods should work together on clear project proposals and neighborhoods and students are responsible for creating a letter of agreement or a work plan for projects.
- Projects will be more focused and successful if the intended use of the results, the relevant background as well as the organization's vision are clear in project proposals and to both students and faculty.
- Students, faculty, and neighborhoods should work together to gather existing information on the topic so that past efforts do not have to be replicated.
- Setting up regular times to meet between the student and the neighborhood liaison throughout the project is often helpful in keeping the project on schedule and the paths of communication open.

## The University-Neighborhood Network

330 Humphrey Center ♦ 301-19<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Mpls, MN 55455 ♦ Ph: 612-625-1551 ♦ Fax: 612-626-0273  
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**Complete Listing of Courses: Spring 1997**

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**HOUSING**

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**Course Name:** 3463: Housing and Community

**Instructor:** Ann Ziebarth

**Phone number:** 625-8795

**E-Mail:** aziebarth@che2.che.umn.edu

**Course Description:** An undergraduate course in the Department of Design, Housing, & Apparel. This course is an examination of the meaning and significance of neighborhood and community. The process of residential neighborhood change and the impact of housing on neighborhood conditions is explored. The course considers theories of neighborhood change, trends in residential development, and ideas of community building. Private sector, community-based, and governmental efforts at neighborhood revitalization and their effectiveness will be studied. Related issues such as racial discrimination in housing, gentrification and the displacement of low-income residents will be surveyed.

**Project Description:** Housing and Community Needs Assessment. A team of four students will devote all 10 weeks of the term to prepare a final paper and a formal presentation.

**Project topic examples:**

- A windshield survey to prepare a map of the conditions of the housing stock in a neighborhood.
- Development of a public opinion survey or analysis of a past survey.

**Requirements of neighborhood:**

1. Project Liaison.
2. Students should be welcome to attend a neighborhood organization meeting.
3. Help identifying key informants and introductions to those individuals.
4. Facilitate communication within the neighborhood: inform board, members and others of the study and that students will be in the neighborhood working on it.

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**PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

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**Course Name:** 5622: Managing Urban Growth and Change

**Instructor:** Tom Luce

**Phone number:** 626-7872

**E-Mail:** tluce@hhh.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A graduate level course in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. This course studies integrated systems of controls and incentives to manage land development at the state, metropolitan, and local government levels. Includes planning and land use devices, tax and fee incentives, environmental regulations, and innovative controls.

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**Project Description:** Term paper. Generally completed by individual students but groups are possible.

**Project topic examples:** Papers may address questions in a wide range of topic areas including: transportation, telecommunications, impact fees, reverse commuting, training programs, housing, affordable housing, scattered site housing, home-based businesses, zoning, land-use management, tax increment financing (TIF), CDC's....

**Requirements of neighborhood:** Project liaison and access to relevant information.

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<b>Course Name:</b>	5002: Planning and Management of Organizational Relations
<b>Instructor:</b>	John Bryson
<b>Phone Number:</b>	625-5888
<b>E-Mail:</b>	jmbryson@hhh.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A graduate level course in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. This survey course examines the challenges facing high-level managers in public and nonprofit organizations. The unique feature of managerial work is that most of the work that needs doing is accomplished through the efforts of others. For example, a Secretary of Education is rarely in the classroom, and a Director of Public Works seldom uses a shovel. Instead, these managers' offices are mainly equipped with devices for facilitating communication and shaping ideas: telephones, computers, mail, conference tables, chairs for visitors, and so on. The successful manager is thus someone who can help "create public value," in Mark Moore's terms, through the way they organize, teach, motivate, empower, provide resources to, or otherwise engage with others to help them find out and accomplish what most needs doing.

Managers have many strategies, tools, and techniques at their disposal to help guide the work of others and create public value. These include:

- Leading
- Influencing the choices and behavior of elected and appointed officials (or what is often called political management)
- Articulating how performance is defined and measured
- Designing and redesigning organizational and interorganizational structures and processes
- Shaping and planning decision making processes
- Managing human resources, managing finances, and other non-human resources
- Managing information and information technology, and
- Using the law and the coercive power of the state.

The strategies, tools, and techniques, however, must be developed and deployed in a very complex environment. This environment includes the constitutionally and legislatively determined features of our democratic republic; our decidedly mixed-economy of public, private, and non-profit organizations; and the growing awareness that there are clear limits

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to what markets, governments, and nonprofit organizations can do, and that ordinary citizens must contribute more toward accomplishing the common good.

**Project Description:** 25 page term paper prepared by student teams.

**Project topic examples:** How to provide leadership and development training for CDC's.

**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison and other resources depending on specifics of project.

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**Course Name:** 5499: Impacts of Welfare Reform on Children

**Instructor:** Shila Ards

**Phone Number:** 626-8733

**E-Mail:** ardsx001@maroon.tc.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A graduate level course in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. This course will include a literature review and discussion of the legislation and programs which exist and will be necessary to deal with pending welfare reforms.

**Project Description:** Individual students will prepare a term paper.

**Project topic examples:** What child care needs will be created through welfare reform? How will the existing social service providers in a specific neighborhood who provide to children be impacted by reforms?

**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison to meet with student throughout the term.
- Additional information and assistance depending on the specifics of the project.

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**Course Name:** 5112: Organizational Design and Change

**Instructor:** Melissa Stone

**Phone Number:** 624-3844

**E-Mail:** mstone@hhh.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A graduate level course in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to basic concepts of organizational design decisions and the managerial challenges associated with organizational change. This course will emphasize organizational change after considering basic dilemmas associated with the most important design decisions. Most organizations, whether public, nonprofit, or for-profit, are experiencing external as well as internal pressures for change driven by major shifts in the role of government, increasing globalization, rapid technological developments, and so forth. Therefore, while the course presents basic material on organizational design, it will concentrate on design decisions in the context of change.

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The course explores three aspects of organization change: a) *the major forces for change*, such as macro-environmental forces, internal evolutionary processes, and internal political change pressures; b) *major kinds of organizational change*, such as change in fundamental identity, planned change, and change in ownership and control; and, c) *managing the change process* from the perspectives of change strategists and implementors who must mobilize commitment to change and confront resistance.

**Project Description:** Small groups will develop a case of organizational (or , interorganizational) change and a teaching note. The case reflects 25% of the requirements for the course.

**Project topic examples:**

- Mini case studies dealing with issues of welfare reform at the neighborhood level. For example, what are the organizational plans for responding to the reforms in 5 different neighborhood, or neighborhood-organizations?
- Where do CDC's fit into the NRP structure? What should be done by the NRP's to reengage the CDC's?

**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison and interview time from key informants.
- Access to information materials.

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**Course Name:** 5442: Feminist Organizations and Feminism as a Social Movement  
**Instructor:** Sally Kenney  
**Phone Number:** 625-3409  
**E-Mail:** skenney@hhh.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A graduate level course in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. This seminar explores the history of second-wave feminism. Within the time constraints of the quarter, the readings aim to be historical as well as comparative. While we survey some of the readings on organizational theory and social movements, the main theme of the course is to explore perennial conflicts within feminism in the context of many institutions: from bookstores, health clinics, battered women shelters, and caucuses, and women's groups within the Catholic church. Recurring conflicts occur over racism, sexuality, hierarchy and professionalization, separation versus integration, how to engage the state, celebrating women's culture and spirituality, linking with other non-feminist organizations such as unions or parties, succession, rewards and the distribution of work within the group, and just plain old folks not getting along. Conflict can be a constructive way for organizations to learn and change. Much as we might learn about canonical works in a discipline by studying the great debates, we can learn much about feminism through studying what feminists advocate for and contest within the movement.

**Project Description:** A case study worth 30% of the class grade.

**Project topic examples:** How the Women's Funding Network attempted to diversify.

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**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison.

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**RHETORIC**

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**Course Name:** 5400: Communication Program Planning and Evaluation

**Instructor:** David Schuelke

**Phone Number:** 624-4709

**E-Mail:** schue001@maroon.tc.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A senior/graduate level course in the Department of Rhetoric. This course deals with the managing of communication messages, materials, and resources within an organization. Emphases are on planning and evaluating communication activities and events and developing message platforms.

**Project Description:** Each student will conduct an assessment of communication activities and events within an organization, develop and propose a plan for improving communication messages, materials, activities, and events, and develop an assessment procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of the entire communication enterprise.

**Project topic examples:** Students could focus on any of a broad variety of communication messages, mediums, and planning issues -- activities, events, objects, newsletters, etc. The student will look at the quality, consider if the communication is accomplishing its goals, and how it is evaluated. Student will then offer a plan for improvement, identifying opportunities and recommendations. Organizations are encouraged to define a broad topic area and then work with student to refine a project for the term.

**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison to meet with student throughout the term.
- Access to information materials, potentially including mission, by-laws, goals and objectives, grant proposals, annual reports.

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**Course Name:** 3572: Procedures and Policies Manual

**Instructor:** Julie Daniels

**Phone Number:** 624-3445

**E-Mail:** danie029@maroon.tc.umn.edu

**Course Description:** An undergraduate level course in the Department of Rhetoric. Procedures and Policies Manual is an elective Rhetoric course in the Scientific and Technical Communication major and minor. This class draws on all the principles studied and skills learned in previous classes -- audience analysis, problem analysis, process



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management, information gathering, oral presentation, visual design, collaboration, and, of course, good writing.

**Project Description:** Each student is required to prepare a procedure booklet that the student designs or redesigns OR the student may create an employee handbook or policy manual for a specific client. This process will include a thorough literature review and research on the topic. The final manual will be presented through a roll-out campaign that the student designs in order to educate the audience and make the manual meaningful and useful. Some students are likely to bring extensive computer expertise to the class and, therefore, could assist in developing a web page or putting the final document on-line.

**Project topic examples:** Policy manuals addressing attendance, vacation, sick leave, world wide web use, parking, human resources issues, security policies, use of space, procedures for use of space, volunteer procedures and policies. Policies and procedures for allocating funds, grants, or staff time. Guide for volunteers: for example, a procedures manual for an after-school group leader documenting resources like games and activities, how to deal with parents, safety issues, responsibilities to kids, legality issues, etc.

**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison to review drafts. Student will begin contacting organizations in mid-April and will work intensively on project through May.
- Ready access to existing policies and procedures information, whether written or oral.
- Commitment that those who will be using the manual will take time to review and test the document and provide feedback to the student.

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**Course Name:** 5573: Grant Proposal Writing  
**Instructor:** Vicki Mikelonis-Paraskov  
**Phone Number:** 624-8206  
**E-Mail:** mikel001@maroon.tc.umn.edu

**Course Description:** A graduate level course in the Department of Rhetoric. This course is designed to familiarize the student with the process of preparing a grant proposal. The process includes developing proposal ideas, learning about the typical components of a grant proposal, and composing a grant proposal that you can actually submit. We will explore issues surrounding public and private proposals, audience analysis, and writing styles. With the help of a guest speaker or two, we will also spend time learning how to locate sources for a grant, both public and private. In keeping with the aims of a writing class, the course will emphasize drafting and revising a persuasive proposal -- one that meets the needs of a selected source of funding.

**Project Description:** A grant proposal will be written by each student in segments over the 10 weeks of the term with the final result being a complete grant proposal.

**Project topic examples:** Grants for a wide variety of topics and clients.

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**Requirements of neighborhood:**

- Project liaison to meet with student throughout the term. Commitment of 1-2 hours a week which includes time to review student assignments. Student will need reviewed assignments within 24-36 hours with written or oral feedback.
- Mission statement of the organization.
- Objectives of the organization.
- Funding leads. Student will identify additional sources.